

Letter from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 18, 1877, with transcript

Tutelo Heights, Brantford, Ont., Can., March 18th, 1877. (No envelope) My dear Alec,

I cannot tell if this will find you at home, but whether or not, you will get it some time and I have nothing particular to write about. We had a newspaper from Providence, and yesterday the "Daily Graphic" which we are delighted with. The illustrations not only give us some idea of your surroundings but the figure of yourself upon the platform is really a likeness, and altogether very suggestive of you. Papa thinks the lady with her back to the spectator is Mabel, and that is Mabel's portrait done in chalk by herself, which hangs near the window in the experimenting room. Papa says the Owl is also a portrait drawn by Mabel—of you!! A "Scotsman" newspaper arrived yesterday of date March 1st, containing a report of the Salem Lecture on the previous evening, from the "Boston Globe", of the 13th, of Feb. We are very glad to find that notices have got into the "Scotsman". By the way, I forgot to tell you that the instrument sent to Scotland by Uncle Edward is now with Mr. and Mrs. Horne.

All are well at the Town house and desirous of knowing when you are to be married. Laurie I believe, is especially so. Your Aunt goes to her about the middle of April as her services are likely to be required some time in May. Mr. Ker was very ill two or three days ago, and 2 we have not heard if he is better, I mean Lillie's husband. Aileen is at last at home. Your Uncle has been away three times during the last week, and has an engagement at Paris on Tuesday, afterwards he expects to be away for nearly a fortnight. Your cousins at home are all well, they make frequent visits to the Town house. Lizzie is going tomorrow for a day or two, and Mary afterwards. We have had terribly cold weather during the last week and hope this is the last bite Jack Frost will give us this season, out of moderation. There is still a great deal of snow, and the thermometer at night below Zero.

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Your cousins went into Town to church today and found it bitterly cold. You won't have time to answer any questions so I need not ask them, but I am wondering if Mabel is still in Boston. I hope you have sent a copy of the "Daily Graphic" to your Uncle Edward. I believe you know his address: E. S. Symonds, Under Treasurer, Treasury Office, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. We hope he is safely home by this time. Papa and your cousins join in love to you and Mabel, with,

Your affectionate Mother, E. G. Bell.

The following is an illustration of the development of English spelling in the Panj?b. It is a verbatim copy of a letter received by a schoolmaster in the north from a householder in his locality:—"Cur, ass, you are a man of no legs and I wish to inter my son in your skull." The obscurity and seeming offensiveness of this address disappear on translation. What was intended to be written was:—"Sir, as you are a man of knowledge, I wish to enter my son at your school."

Madame Ilma di Murska seems destined never to enjoy wedded bliss. After her separation from her first Australian husband, the fifth or sixth in the list of marital incumbances, she became enamoured of an indifferent musician named Hill—or, as he chose to call himself on the perfumed concert programmes, Stranbilla—and after a brief courtship married him. The very first night of wedlock he smashed all the porcelain vases in the bridal chamber, and, inspired by a sanguinary spirit, ruthlessly slaughtered the two small terriers of the songstress, her three canary birds, a parrot, a monkey, and five cats of rare breed.

At one time, in the early winter months, one of the telegraphic cables, crossing the Mississippi, was broken. As bad luck never comes singly, it so happened at the time that the river was wild with floating ice, and it was literally impossible for those on one side to communicate with those on the other by the ordinary method. In this dilemma it occurred to Col. Wilson to bring a locomotive into requisition. As quickly as possible he submitted himself to a short but comprehensive course of instruction with reference to working the

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whistle of the new contrivance, and having acquired the art, the iron horse was pranced to a point near the river's side, and then the Colonel began to "blow his horn" as he never blew it before or since. People in the town on the opposite side wondered for a long time what had got into that locomotive, but all of a sudden a telegraph operator over yonder began to prick up his ears, and exclaimed, "Why, that darned locomotive is calling this station; it is giving our signal!" Then it occurred to the operator what was wanted, and engaging a locomotive on his own side of the river ran it to a convenient point, and there ensued what ever must be regarded as one of the loudest intelligible conversations on record. The method of confab proved perfectly satisfactory.